

INL's tank armor production project reaches significant safety milestone

Idaho National Laboratory's Specific Manufacturing Capability (SMC) project reached a significant milestone Jan. 10, 2007 - 3 million man-hours worked without a lost-time injury or illness.

The SMC project manufactures armor for the U.S. Army's M1A2 Abrams main battle tank. The facility's 223 employees handle and process more than two million pounds of metal materials each month during operations.

The start of this milestone was in October 2000. A lost-time accident is one that results in an employee having to be away from the work site one or more days.

SMC Associate Laboratory Director David Kudsin attributes the project's six-plus years of continued operational and safety success to the employees.

"INL has always made employee safety a primary commitment and goal. The three million man-hour milestone is an indicator of the employees' commitment to working safely and to their commitment to producing a world-class product. This is an example of INL's integrated safety management at work," Kudsin said.

The SMC project, at Test Area North, started with a memorandum of understanding between the Army and the U.S. Department of Energy in February 1985. Material production began in November 1986 with the first unit being delivered in October 1987. During 1988, SMC achieved full production and has been working at capacity ever since.

To date, some 3,900 armor packages have been produced at the SMC.

[View](#) letter of recognition from Dennis Spurgeon, assistant secretary for Nuclear Energy.

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Photo: M1A2 Abrams tank

An M1A2 Abrams tank fires its main battle cannon during a training operation (image courtesy of Department of Defense).